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WOMEN'S GROUP WANTS EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF SOUTH SUDAN PEACE DEAL

SANI MARTIN
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The South Sudan Women Network for Peace has embarked on a sustained campaign to push for effective implementation of the country's Peace Agreement.

The women say they have elaborated a seven-point agenda based on the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. According to Dr Priscilla Joseph who is leading the initiative, they are advocating security and a permanent ceasefire, among other concerns.

"When we talk security as women, we're talking human security. It's not about the guns," she explained in an exclusive interview with Radio Miraya. "It's about our life, food, education and health. We want the government to spend money on these issues, not guns."

Dr Joseph said that the Peace Network was therefore challenging the Government to stand up to its responsibilities.

"We want a government that is guided by the values of peace, human rights, equality, freedom, democracy, social justice and the rule of law," the peace activist persisted, stressing the need for effective and accountable governance, including the judicious use of limited resources to deliver on social services.

Dr Joseph sounded determined, explaining that the Network was simply pushing for a prosperous, progressive and peaceful South Sudan. Accordingly, the group was also talking to the grassroots.

"Peace is the responsibility of everyone," she argued. "Government alone cannot bring about peace."

Rather than rush to join the military or grab a gun and fight, Dr Joseph challenged South Sudanese to consider the merits of other and even better options.

"Right now a piece of tomato sells for 10 [South Sudanese] pounds. If they produce these they would make more money in a day than they would make in a year in the army," she reckoned.

Concerning the general grudge about corruption, she countered that it was a two-way traffic, and that corrupt government officials and those who yield to their demands were but two sides of the same coin. "Why pay for a service to which you're entitled?" she queried.

Public sensitization apart, it is with the authorities that the women's group is squarely pursuing the drive for a ceasefire and implementation of the Peace Agreement in South Sudan.

"Our advocacy documents will be presented to the Government. We shall sit in their offices and tell them what we want," Dr Joseph said, insisting it would require a robust and sustained advocacy to get the authorities to act.

"We can't just sit back in our homes and expect them to deliver. The government will deliver only when we sit in front of their offices and talk to them," she said, adding: "We'll be after them morning and evening to know what they're doing to bring peace to this country."